



City of Santa Barbara
Water Resources Division
Building & Safety Division
Graywater Fact Sheet

Community
Development &
Public Works
Departments
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The California Building Standards Commission (BSC) on July 30, 2009 adopted new code language for residential graywater use that took effect August 4, 2009. This rulemaking is found in the California Plumbing Code, Title 24, Part 5, Chapter 16A, Part I.

General Rules

- These new regulations apply to single or two-family residential buildings only.
- Kitchen sink, toilets, and diaper soiled water are not included in the definition of graywater.
- No ponding, spray, or exposed runoff of graywater is allowed.
- All systems must have an air-gap or suitable backflow prevention to protect the potable water system.
- Not for root crops or edible portions of food crops.

When is a Permit is Not Required

Two types of Graywater Systems DO NOT require a City building permit; clothes washer only and single-fixture systems.

Eleven conditions apply to these two types of systems that do not require a permit:

1. The design shall allow the user to direct the flow to the irrigation or disposal field or the building sewer. The direction control of the graywater shall be clearly labeled and readily accessible to the user.
2. The installation, change, alteration or repair of the system does not include a potable water connection or a pump and does not affect other building, plumbing, electrical or mechanical components including structural features, egress, fire-life safety, sanitation, potable water supply piping or accessibility.
3. The graywater shall be contained on the site where it is generated.
4. Graywater shall be directed to and contained within an irrigation or disposal field.
5. Ponding or runoff is prohibited and shall be considered a nuisance.
6. Graywater may be released above the ground surface provided at least two (2) inches (51 mm) of mulch, rock, or soil, or a solid shield covers the release point. Other methods which provide equivalent separation are also acceptable.
7. Graywater systems shall be designed to minimize contact with humans and domestic pets.

8. Water used to wash diapers or similarly soiled or infectious garments shall not be used and shall be diverted to the building sewer.

9. Graywater shall not contain hazardous chemicals derived from activities such as cleaning car parts, washing greasy or oily rags, or disposing of waste solutions from home photo labs or similar hobbyist or home occupational activities.

10. Exemption from construction permit requirements of this code shall not be deemed to grant authorization for any graywater system to be installed in a manner that violates other provisions of this code or any other laws or ordinances of the Enforcing Agency.

11. An operation and maintenance manual shall be provided. Directions shall indicate the manual is to remain with the building throughout the life of the system and indicate that upon change of ownership or occupancy, the new owner or tenant shall be notified the structure contains a graywater system.

These Graywater Systems DO Require Permits

1. Simple System. Up to 250 gpd of discharge, not including a clothes washer and single fixture system. All other aspects of the code apply.

2. Complex System. Over 250 gpd of discharge. All other aspects of the code apply.

SOME OTHER REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL GRAYWATER SYSTEMS

Discharge of Graywater to Landscapes

- Mulch basins are an acceptable type of disposal field.
- Disposal through drip irrigation has to be under a minimum of 2" of soil or mulch.

Indoor Graywater Reuse

Treatment is required by an on-site water treatment system approved by the City Building & Safety Division.